

Kentucky Teacher

April 2008

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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High expectations for all students in this classroom

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News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Front cover: Kelva Nelson, the Kentucky American Star of Teaching for 2007, asks Taylor Castro, left, and Kevin Preston questions about what they have just read in her primary classroom at Crabbe Elementary School (Ashland Independent). Photo by Amy Wallot

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Nine middle schools named Schools to Watch

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform has named nine middle-level schools 2008 Kentucky Schools to Watch. The schools are Belfry Middle School (Pike County), Benton Middle School (Marshall County), Eastside Middle School (Bullitt County), F.T. Burns Middle School (Davies County), James E. Bazzell Middle School (Allen County), Lloyd B. McGuffey Sixth Grade Center (Lincoln County), Northern Middle School (Pulaski County), Oldham County Middle School (Oldham County) and Olmstead Elementary School (Logan County).

The Schools to Watch program, currently in 16 states, is part of an initiative developed and guided by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Schools are recognized for a three-year period; then, at the end of three years a school must reapply. For the current three-year period, there are about 150 schools that have been designated as Schools to Watch. Sixteen schools in Kentucky are designated, and four of those have been through the application process twice.

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform selected each school for its academic excellence and its responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents and for being committed to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, each school has strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and an organization that sustains continuous improvement and achievement.

"These schools are true communities of learning," said Fran Salyers, Kentucky Schools to Watch program director.

"We are pleased that our Schools to Watch program has shown that schools can meet high academic expectations while preserving a commitment to healthy development and equity for all students," said Deborah Kasak, National Forum executive director. "These Schools to Watch are indeed special. They make education so exciting that students and teachers don't want to miss a day! These schools have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieving excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples."

Schools submitted a written application showing how they met criteria for excellence developed by the National Forum. State teams visited schools that appeared to meet the criteria to observe classrooms and interview administrators, teachers, students and parents. The teams also looked at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons, student work and other school documents.

Launched in 1999, the Schools to Watch program identifies middle-grades schools across the country that are meeting or exceeding 37 criteria developed by the National Forum. In 2002, the National Forum began working with states to replicate the Schools to Watch program as a way to introduce the Forum's criteria for high-performance and to identify middle-grades schools that meet or exceed that criteria.

Members of different education organizations in each participating state have received

training and support from the forum to implement their Schools to Watch programs. In Kentucky, the lead organization is the Kentucky Center for Middle School Academic Achievement (CMSAA), housed at Eastern Kentucky University.

MORE INFO ...

National Forum: John Harrison, (910) 235-3761, www.schoolstowatch.org

Kentucky: Fran Salyers, CMSAA, (859) 622-1513, www.middleschoolhouse.eku.edu



Photo by Amy Wallot

Teacher Candace Fleming looks for volunteers to answer a question in her science classroom at Millard Middle School (Pike County), which was recently recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School. "The big reason we've had success at our school is we expect the best of everyone day in and day out," said Principal Tommy Thornsberry. "We've developed one of the best teaching staffs in eastern Kentucky, and we are using the best teaching techniques available." Second Street School (Frankfort Independent) was the only other Kentucky school to receive the national honor.

Two Title I schools recognized

Second Street School (Frankfort Independent) and Millard Middle School (Pike County) were recognized earlier this year as National Title I Distinguished Schools during the National Title I Conference in Tennessee. The two schools are among approximately 70 others from throughout the nation to receive the honor.

As mandated under the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, the Title I Distinguished Schools Recognition Program recognizes schools that:

- significantly close achievement gaps among student populations
- exceed state-defined adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets under NCLB for two or more consecutive years

Second Street School serves 435 students in grades K-6. Millard Middle, which opened five years ago, has an enrollment of 540 students.

In Kentucky, nearly 900 schools operate Title I programs that serve approximately 300,000 students.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Jon Draud, Commissioner of Education

Blue Ribbon Panel begins looking at best intervention strategies

In my first *Kentucky Teacher* column as commissioner of education, I spoke about the sense of urgency I have for moving all schools to proficiency by 2014. That date is fast approaching, and I want to make certain now that every school has access to the tools that have proven to increase student achievement.

Though our public schools have been guided by the mantra, "Every Student Proficient and Prepared for Success," we still have many schools in Kentucky that are performing well below the assistance lines on their accountability growth charts. Many other schools are not meeting their biennial accountability goals at a pace that will put them at proficiency by 2014.

The Kentucky Board of Education has provided many programs and services through the Department of Education to help these lower- and lowest-performing schools improve. Despite the strategies and resources that have been made available, some of these schools are not improving.

This is hard to accept when we know these strategies and resources have helped other low-performing schools get back on track for proficiency. We have too many examples of low-performing schools that have become high performers when the adults in the buildings were receptive to change.

To help ignite a sense of urgency for school improvement among all Kentucky public school educators, I have named a Blue Ribbon Panel of educators, education stakeholders and staff from the Kentucky Department of Education. The panel met for the first time Feb. 25 to begin reviewing Kentucky's intervention strategies.

The panel's focus is on strategies and resources that have been successful in helping struggling schools raise the achievement levels of all students. The group also will analyze academic assistance programs from other states.

It may be time to reexamine current legislation governing state intervention with low-performing schools. This panel may want to discuss changes to that law that would allow the Department of Education the authority to intervene sooner in lower-performing schools.

However, the ultimate goal is for the panel to compile a comprehensive list of replicable programs that can be used by schools throughout Kentucky. This list will be shared

with all public schools before the release of the 2007-08 biennial accountability results.

The panel also offers the opportunity to build relationships among all education stakeholders. When the panel's work is completed, I expect Kentucky to have a more collaborative, coordinated focus on school improvement and opportunities for increasing community involvement in school success.

Task force to review CATS

By the time you read this column, the work of the 2008 session of the General Assembly will be drawing to a close, and I will be preparing to convene a statewide task force to review Kentucky's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). I plan to bring together a broad group of individuals to serve on the task force – legislative leaders from both major parties, higher education representatives and experts in state, regional and national assessment and accountability issues.

We know that any high-stakes system like CATS needs periodic review. There are many good components in CATS and legitimate concerns about some aspects of CATS. However, there's no need to throw out the entire system. I want to ensure that we're engaged in activities that are in the best interests of our public school students.

When the task force begins work, members will want to hear from teachers and admin-

istrators, as well as parents, business people, elected officials and education advocacy groups. The group also will analyze individual components of CATS and determine the effectiveness of those in meeting the needs of students.

I encourage you to begin thinking about what you want the task force to know about CATS and how it is working in your schools – pros and cons. I am certain there will be a mechanism by which teachers, administra-

tors, parents and other stakeholders can provide input to the task force.

The task force will need information from all of Kentucky's education stakeholders to achieve consensus about what needs to be done to make certain CATS remains one of the nation's top assessment and accountability systems.

New communications tools

In February, I instituted two new ways of communicating about important education issues. "On the Radar" is a new e-mail update I plan to use to briefly inform superintendents about high-interest information that has just appeared on the department's "radar screen." (See item on Page 13.)

I've also resumed my role as talk-show host for a department television program, *Kentucky Education Issues*. Plans are to produce two programs each month.

I will be inviting leading educators and policy makers to join me to discuss education topics important to students, teachers and taxpayers. My first guests, Robin Kinney, associate commissioner with the department's Office of Internal Administration and Support, and Budget Director Petie Day, talked with me about state budget proposals for education.

In addition to being available on Insight Cable in northern Kentucky and its affiliates throughout the state, the program will air on the Kentucky Channel (KET3). We also are making it available on the department's Web site at www.education.ky.gov. Just look for the *Kentucky Education Issues* link, and click.

To comment on these topics, contact Commissioner Draud at jon.draud@education.ky.gov.



Draud

Blue Ribbon Panel members

Thirty-one educators, education stakeholders and staff from the Kentucky Department of Education are members of the Blue Ribbon Panel on intervention strategies: **David Addisson**, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce; **Rosz Akins**, Fayette County school district; **David Baird**, Kentucky School Boards Association; **Elisa Beth Brown**, Logan County school district;

Susie Burkhardt, Shelby County school district; **Roger Cleveland**, Morehead State University; the **Rev. Kevin Cosby**, Louisville; **Jane Couch**, a parent from Johnson County; **Dave Cox**, Corbin Independent school district; **Gary Fields**, Bowling Green Independent school district; **Bonnie L. Freeman**, Kentucky Board of Education; **Susan French**, Jefferson County school district;

Ronda Harmon, Kentucky Association of School Councils; **Sherron Jackson**, Council on Postsecondary Education; **Brady Link**, Graves County school district; **Tim Moore**, Mason County school district; **Helen Mountjoy**, Kentucky Education Cabinet;

Marco Munoz, Jefferson County school district; **Polly Page**, Partnership for Successful Schools; **Richard Prewitt**, Whitley County school district;

Bob Sexton, Prichard Committee; **Stu Silberman**, Fayette County school district; **Frank Welch**, Pike County school district; and **Doug Whitlock**, Eastern Kentucky University.

Seven staff members from the department on the panel are **Claude Christian**, **Ken Draut**, **Elaine Farris**, **Johnnie Grissom**, **Steve Schenck**, **Jamie Spugnardi** and **Larry Stinson**.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Impressive vantage point

Jarrod Ingles, a sophomore at Monticello High School (Monticello Independent), took a few minutes from his duties as a Senate page to contemplate the view from the Senate President's dais in the state capitol. Teacher Jennifer Chaplin brought Ingles and other students in the high school's gifted and talented program to Frankfort to serve as pages during the 2008 General Assembly, learn about Kentucky government and visit historic attractions in Frankfort.

Fort Thomas administrators return to classroom roots

By Susan Riddell

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Rita Byrd hands each student in her class \$25 in play money. Next, she hands out sale flyers from a recent newspaper. Then she tells the students they can buy anything they want with their pretend money.

Woodfill Elementary (Fort Thomas Independent) exiting-primary student Jana Riffe starts flipping through her CVS flyer and decides to buy a \$14.99 disposable cell phone.

"How much do you get back after paying for your phone?" Byrd asks. Jana then walks to a dry-erase board to write and solve the equation. She turns around cautiously, showing her answer to Byrd, who nods her head that Jana is correct.

Jana is just one of many Woodfill students who get remedial mathematics help from Byrd. However, Byrd isn't a teacher in the Fort Thomas school district. She's the assistant superintendent of student services.

First-year Fort Thomas Superintendent John Williamson wanted all 11 of his fellow district administrators to return to their teaching roots, so he asked them to find a way to get back into classroom teaching.

During his 18 years in education, which include being an assistant principal and curriculum director, plus eight years as the assistant superintendent in the Fort Thomas Independent district, Williamson has taught a class in all but two years.

"Even though I was doing what I considered to be good work, I still felt a little unfulfilled," Williamson said. "All people who go into education have this innate desire to teach and to help others."

"I wanted to make sure our administrators haven't lost or won't lose touch with classrooms," he added. "There's a passion involved with teaching kids, and I wanted to bring the administrators back into the reality of working in a classroom."

Williamson let administrators choose where they wanted to teach. Some teach a class every day, while others teach once a week and work with certain student groups. The administrators decide how they can connect to the district's classrooms.

Williamson teaches a junior AP English class at Highlands High School. He says he's a better teacher now looking at the work through an administrator's eyes than he was before. (He taught at Johnson Central High School [Johnson County] prior to moving into administration.)

"What is so exciting every day is to have an engaging activity for my students," said Williamson. "Fifteen years ago, I didn't know as much as I do now, and I'm still able to bring what I've learned into the classroom."



Photos by Amy Wallot

Rita Byrd, assistant superintendent at Fort Thomas Independent school district, talks with exiting-primary student Max Abanto, who is looking through sale flyers to decide how he will spend \$25 in play money as part of a mathematics activity.

"I actually see how working on the budget affects students," he added. "It's all about forming relationships. I know a good chunk of the students at the high school. I think it's rare for a superintendent to actually know kids to that extent. It makes every decision I make real because I'm impacting children. Working with kids is the best part of my day."

Other administrators see how their presence in the classroom benefits teachers.

"As an administrative team, we're bringing back reality," said Assistant Superintendent Byrd, who works with Highlands High School's Senior Seminar in addition to her Woodfill responsibilities. "We're not just talking about lessons to other teachers. We have to do those things, too. This gives us the opportunity to try strategies before we recommend them to teachers."

For Highlands Middle School Principal Mary Adams, being back in a classroom serves as a refresher course on the everyday struggles teachers goes through. "I am able to see firsthand some of our teachers' frustrations," she said. "Examples might be students



Chris Polly, left, watches Jana Riffe explain to Fort Thomas Independent Assistant Superintendent Rita Byrd the mathematics equation she used to find out how much money she would have after purchasing a disposable cell phone. Byrd helps Woodfill Elementary primary students with mathematics instruction once a week.

who come unprepared, unmotivated or with poor skills. By seeing this firsthand, I am better able to help the teachers brainstorm ways to help in their classrooms."

Adams and Assistant Principal Keith Faust work with at-risk middle school students and with a reading-recovery class.

"I really like the idea," Adams said of having administrators teaching students. "It's good for us to keep in touch with students and teachers. I think it is good for students to see us in that light. Even though it's difficult time-wise, it's worthwhile for everyone to try."

All agree that fitting lesson planning and teaching time into a full-time administrative schedule is clearly the most-demanding aspect of Superintendent Williamson's program.

Williamson said many administrators schedule their class time before or after regular school hours. His hour-long English class is conducted prior to the start of school every morning, and he's quick to point out his students don't get out early in the afternoons just because they come in early for his class.

"This year I have 28 students, and next year I've got 49 students who signed up for my class," he said. "This is a priority for me, so we're carving out time. About half of our administrators are in classes during the school day, and we have to schedule administrator

meetings with everyone's schedule in mind. When it's someone's class time, that time is sacred on the calendar, and you work around it. It's tough, but we're seeing the rewards."

Assistant Superintendent Byrd heads to Woodfill every Wednesday morning at the beginning of the school day instead of going to the central office first.

"If I go into the office, it's so hard to get away," she said. "The phone will ring constantly or something else will come up. That's why I chose to come in the morning where I could come straight to school from my home."

Williamson believes larger districts can implement his program. He says administrators have to be committed and flexible. They must have a passion for teaching. They also must target where there are needs within the district.

In addition, he feels the initiative could be used as an opportunity to mentor new teachers. "Teachers can learn so much just by watching other teachers," he said.

Despite the time requirement and administrators' unpredictable schedules, Williamson said his administrators will continue to teach Fort Thomas students next year and beyond.

"In administration, it can be empty and lonely, but teaching can fulfill us and bring a wholeness to the job," he said. "We are all doing different things in different grade levels, but I hope it's all with the same objective in mind."

MORE INFO...

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'Star of Teaching'

Nelson is devoted to primary students

By Susan Riddell

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Kelva Nelson loves to sing.

Now, others are singing her praises as a primary educator.

The 29-year teaching veteran was recently named as the lone Kentucky American Star of Teaching for 2007.

American Stars of Teaching is a national honor recognizing superior teachers with a track record of improving student achievement, using innovative instructional strategies and making a difference in the lives of their students.

Nelson has taught all 29 years of her career at Crabbe Elementary School (Ashland Independent). She said she couldn't imagine teaching anywhere else.

"I love this school," she said. "We have children of all kinds of backgrounds, all kinds of economic backgrounds. It's like the real world. The faculty cares about all of them, and the children love to be here and learn. It's a wonderful environment.

"I think this whole school deserves my award because everybody here is great. It's not just me. When the students walk through that front door, we're here to love them and try to educate them. They are here because they want those things from us," she added.

Even as a child, Nelson knew she wanted to teach young children.

"All I can ever remember is I wanted to teach," Nelson said. "My inspiration is my mother. She always wanted to teach kindergarten but never had the opportunity to go to college. That was always somewhere in the back of my mind. I knew I would get to do what she didn't get to do."

Crabbe Elementary Principal Steve Hall said, "Teaching is a calling (to her) as opposed to a job."

Nelson said children have always been drawn to her.

"Everywhere I'd go, even when I was young, children always came up to me, and I thought, 'What is this about?' I just knew I wanted to teach and work with children. I'm blessed to have been given that opportunity," she said.

What did surprise Nelson when she became an educator was what she was teaching.

"I thought I'd teach music," Nelson said.

"I love to sing, so I was going to be a music teacher. That didn't happen, but I still spend a lot of time working with music in the schools."

Nelson regularly performs with school choruses at Crabbe Elementary. Recently, she was a featured singer in Ashland's community celebration for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Nelson prefers working with primary students. She has spent all 29 years in the primary classroom.

"I think at this age you still have the ability to mold them some," Nelson said of her primary students. "They are still excited about coming to school and wanting to learn. I think if you can affect a life at an early age, you can make it into a positive. By then, children aren't so much set in their ways and teachers can really make a great impact. That's why you need great teachers on the primary end. Those children are just starting out. They get excited about learning, and that makes you excited about teaching."

"I'm strict, but I care. The kids know that."

— Kelva Nelson

Principal Hall said Nelson follows a teaching philosophy based on allowing a student to take responsibility for his or her own education.

"Her style of teaching is to have students take ownership in their schoolwork," he said. "Her students do not sit in their seats and listen only. They are hands-on, collaborating with other students. They feel very comfortable about asking for help when an academic point is eluding them."

"She has high expectations for all students, and they understand that very clearly," he added, "but they also feel the love and compassion she has for each of them as she pushes them to fulfill their own maximum potential."

Nelson said she begins with what each student already knows.

"Then you allow them to construct their own understanding," she said. "They will be able to foster a deep learning that can be applied in different areas. I need to engage my students in meaningful classroom experiences and start with the end in mind."

"I truly believe everyone can learn in his or her own way," she added. "The best tool is still a caring teacher. We must be willing to grow and change to meet the needs of our students."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Kelva Nelson, Kentucky's American Star of Teaching for 2007, points to a word for Crabbe Elementary primary student Taylor Castro to read as they study words with the "ir" sound.

Hall believes Nelson's best assets as a teacher are "her commitment to each child, her enthusiasm for life and her willingness to pursue growth as a professional through new cutting-edge training opportunities," he said.

Nelson adds she's no pushover in the classroom but she's also ready to reach out to children far beyond the classroom setting.

"I'm strict, but I care," she said. "The kids know that. I'm the kind of teacher that if there's an issue, I will call parents or go knock on the front door and say, 'Your child is having this problem. Is there anything I can do?' Sometimes you have to deal with home issues, and I'm there. I get involved. Like I said, I'm strict but I'm a hugger, too. I love when kids come up to me and want hugs."

"It excites me when children are happy," Nelson added. "Knowing you had a part in making them happy is even better."

Even though she's been teaching for 29 years, Nelson isn't looking to retire anytime soon.

"I'm going to work on my certification to become a principal," she said of the near future. "I think you can have a greater impact on a lot more classrooms as a principal. I absolutely love teaching, but this way you can set the atmosphere for your school and be more involved with a lot more children and parents, too."

MORE INFO ...

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Getting the community involved in painting Central City red

By Wendy Michele Bowling
Muhlenberg County Schools

As Central City Elementary's curriculum specialist, I see it as my responsibility to incorporate making healthy choices and saying no to drugs as an important focus of our curriculum.

Drug abuse is a growing problem among adults in Muhlenberg County, and it is affecting our students. Grandparents, other relatives and foster parents are raising a growing number of our students because some parents are in jail for manufacturing, selling or using illegal drugs.

Educating our students to the dangers of drug use is part of their character education and essential to their future successes. I proposed to our faculty a community involvement project that would make students more aware that there are many people throughout our community who want to keep them safe and who don't want them to use or abuse drugs.

This "Paint the Town Red" project coincided with Red Ribbon Week last October. Because it was a success, I want to share what Central City Elementary did so that teachers in other schools can see that getting community support for projects and programs is not that difficult.

Community involvement in education is crucial to our students. Therefore, I always seek the cooperation of local residents for projects at our school. For the Red Ribbon Week activity, I used many community resources. It was work, but I just asked for specific help.

Representatives at our middle and high schools, the Muhlenberg County Board of Education, Superintendent Dale Todd, Central City merchants and many residents united to show our students that people in the community support their efforts to stay drug-free.

I asked everyone to display red ribbons to show support for the children in their efforts to make

good choices. My goal was to "Paint the Town Red" by Oct. 30.

Community support

I planned many special activities for the last week of October 2007. We aligned the activities with Kentucky's Core Content to provide exciting and meaningful activities for the students.

Central City Mayor Jerry Mitchell and police officer Ken Curtis spoke to students about the consequences of making good and bad choices in life. Officers Jason Lindsey and Chris Flener showed our students how the city's police dog finds hidden drugs. They also reassured students not to be afraid if the dogs come near their homes or family cars.

School nurse Carolyn Walker introduced students to Mr. Bones, her skeleton model, and used him to talk about the effects of drinking alcohol and driving. She also discussed the physical problems caused from excessive drinking and tobacco use.

Marilyn Woodruff from our Family Resource Center and I spoke to students about making a pledge to be drug-free. Each student received a pledge card.

Grade-level projects

The teachers and I planned activities for each grade level to help involve someone from the community in our project. Students also worked on group projects to help "Paint the Town Red."

Primary students learned about local government and making healthy choices. They were involved in several art projects to help decorate the school and downtown businesses.

Fourth-graders wrote persuasive letters to Central City residents asking them to "Paint the Town Red" and to make healthy choices. I submitted the four best-written letters to newspapers to be published.

Fifth-graders painted anti-drug messages on downtown store windows where merchants had given permission. Art teacher Vicki Taylor taught students how to drape red

fabric to mimic works by environmental installation artist Christo, which aligned this project to arts and humanities content.

Be prepared

Key to making a project like this work is to prepare ahead of time. I sent letters in advance to get permission to paint business windows. I submitted letters to local newspapers telling the community about our school project and explaining how important it would be for our students to see red ribbons throughout our city. I talked to the 4th-graders before they wrote their persuasive letters.

Other activities

On "Paint the Town Red" day, the school staff and students all wore red clothing. Every student had a red ribbon and bracelet to wear. With permission from parents and guardians and Principal Mary Ann Payton, we sprayed students' hair with temporary red hair color. This was in preparation of taking an aerial photo of our faculty, staff and students outside the school building.

After the aerial photo session, the Muhlenberg North High School dance team performed two dances to show their support to our students. The coach, Stacey Dearth, told the elementary students that the dancers must be drug-free and make healthy choices to be on the dance team.

Community support came from several areas. Some businesses "painted" their own storefronts red. First Kentucky Bank employees wore red to work. The Methodist church placed a banner of support on its front porch.

In addition, I wrote a children's book about making healthy choices. After reading it to the students, we discussed the ways that peer pressure affects the choices we make in life.

Follow-up activity

Following "Paint the Town Red" day, state Rep. Brent Yonts, who represents our county in the Kentucky General Assembly, visited 4th- and 5th-grade classes to discuss drug

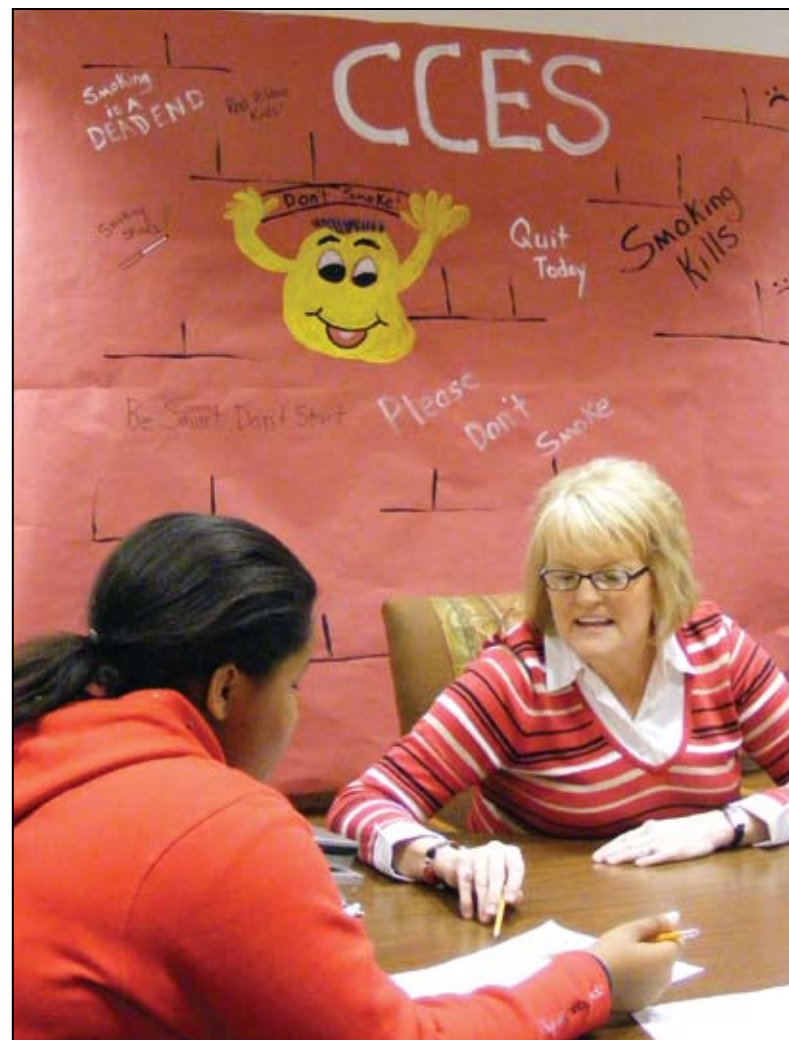


Photo by Amy Wallot

Wendy Michele Bowling, right, and Central City Elementary 5th-grader DeAndrea Parker discuss the script DeAndrea created for a public service announcement to encourage local residents to stop smoking and donate the money they save to help local residents who suffered damage during the tornado that hit Muhlenberg County in February. Through a variety of programs, such as "Paint the Town Red," Bowling keeps students connected to their community and the community connected to the school.

use and steroid abuse. Yonts also told students about drug laws and the role he plays in introducing these laws. This is content students can use in state assessments.

Success stories

A few months after our celebration, I surveyed the 4th- and 5th-grade students to see what, if any, impact "Paint the Town Red" had on them.

Every student wrote that they would not use illegal drugs in the future and made comments about how they want to make healthy choices in life. I am not so naïve that I believe they will all stay on that path. However, if this program saves one child, it is a success.

Later, a 4th-grader told me, "My mom put up red ribbons during 'Paint the Town Red' week. It made me feel good that people were on

my side and wanted to help me."

He said he had talked to his 13-year-old brother about drugs. He said he told his brother that drugs were bad and that "they turn your teeth black." He also told his brother, "Nicotine makes your lungs black."

This student made me realize that our community event did help our children and that our children will continue to help each other.

I'm developing new ideas for next year's event. Perhaps we all can join together and "Paint the STATE Red."

Wendy Michele Bowling is the curriculum specialist, elementary consultant and literacy coordinator at Central City Elementary (Muhlenberg County). She can be reached at (270) 754-4474, wendy.bowling@muhlenbergkyschools.us.

Changes at Sorgho Elementary contribute to Blue Ribbon honor

By Susan Riddell

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What do you get when you take one semi-rural elementary school, add a new building, a new mathematics curriculum and nearly double the school's student population over a short period of time?

The answer at Sorgho Elementary School (Daviness County) is simple: a No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Blue Ribbon School.

Sorgho Elementary has changed in many ways since moving into its new building in 1997. Thanks to consistent, high-quality leadership, according to Superintendent Tom Shelton, the school has achieved and maintained academic excellence.

"We've grown to expect it," Shelton, in his fourth year as superintendent, said about a district school earning Blue Ribbon honors. "That sounds arrogant, but our schools have continually done well. We've just come to expect excellence. It's gratifying and an affirmation that we're doing right things in our schools."

The Blue Ribbon award recognizes schools that help students achieve at high levels and make significant progress in closing achievement gaps. The program rewards schools that score in the top 10 percent statewide in reading and mathematics on state assessments. Schools also must make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the requirements of the NCLB Act.

Sorgho is one of two Daviness County schools named as a national Blue Ribbon winner this school year. Whitesville Elementary is the other.

Providing opportunities

According to Principal Beverly Dawson, after the new Sorgho building opened in 1997 and redistricting relieved overcrowding in the Daviness County schools, Sorgho:

- no longer was a community school serving a small community, but rather a blended school serving a number of small communities
- grew from a small school of fewer than 300 P-5 students to one serving more than 500 students



Photos by Amy Wallot

Students in Debbie Wells' kindergarten class work with a variety of manipulatives to complete a counting assignment.



Primary student Molly Ward and all students at Sorgho Elementary (Daviness County) wear special T-shirts proclaiming the school's recognition as a Blue Ribbon School during an assembly.

- changed from a school serving mostly a heterogeneous population of rural Caucasian students to a more racially diverse one serving more urban students and African-American, Hispanic and Asian students
 - has more than 50 percent of its student population participating in the free- and reduced-price meals program
- "Despite those changes, Sorgho Elementary has stressed academic

excellence," Dawson said.

The school has made great strides the last several years. In 1999, Sorgho's Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS) accountability index was 75.8. By 2006, that number had increased to 105.8. The school's adjusted accountability index in 2007 was 106.

Dawson said Sorgho has an expectation of academic excellence just like the one Shelton described across the district spectrum.

"Test scores must be high, but more importantly, student learning must be high," Dawson said. "At Sorgho, there is an emphasis on not just data collection, but the use of ongoing data collection to monitor if we're hitting academic goals and continuous retooling of strategies when problems are noted."

"I believe the glue that holds together all of these pieces is a warm, nurturing and friendly culture and climate that focuses on meeting the needs of students and staff," she added.

Overhauling mathematics

The biggest improvement in core content results at Sorgho has been in mathematics. In 1999, Sorgho's mathematics index was 60.7. In 2003, that number had increased to 76.0, but the biggest jump came a year later when the school reached

108.6 in mathematics achievement.

That jump marks when Sorgho overhauled its mathematics curriculum and started using Everyday Mathematics, Dawson said.

Mathematics teacher Julie Reid, who has been at Sorgho for eight of her 14 years in education, said a typical fraction lesson in Everyday Mathematics involves hands-on activities to help students see the number concept. To solve the problem of finding two-thirds of one-half, Reid has students fold a piece of paper in half vertically.

Then she has students color one half of the paper before folding the same paper in thirds horizontally. Students then color two-thirds of the paper, showing two of the six squares have been colored twice, giving two-sixth, or one-third, for the answer.

Prior to Everyday Mathematics, students were simply told two-thirds of one-half is one-third, she said.

"To me, the old way teaches the process of how to multiply fractions, and Everyday Mathematics teaches the concept of the skill," Reid said. "Our students learn and remember more when they understand why. We want our kids to think about math and not just do it."

Principal Dawson and Superintendent Shelton agree Everyday Mathematics isn't the sole reason for the improved and now consistent, high indices. In 2007, Sorgho's mathematics index was 114.7.

"The primary reason for this increase has been that the entire school has worked on a more rigorous math curriculum and has committed to assuring high math achievement," Dawson said. "Everyday Mathematics is a research-based curriculum focusing on critical thinking, but the teachers use good skills in implementing, modifying and supplementing it as necessary. So it's not the curriculum that has produced the changes. It's the dedication of the teachers that's responsible."

Building leadership

"In addition to our literacy focus, we also have a numeracy focus," Shelton said. "The instructional

staff here works with principals to provide a heavy focus and support in both literacy and numeracy. We've done a lot of training on how to integrate math with other content."

"Keeping your student achievement at high levels hinges on leadership within the school," Shelton said. "I'm convinced that every school is only going to be able to achieve at the level its leader will take them to, and we've got strong principals at every school in our district. Beverly and her leadership team drive everything that goes on at Sorgho."

Expanding preschool program

Sorgho also has revamped its preschool program in recent years. Before, Sorgho housed the preschool that served students with disabilities across the district.

"A strong advocacy effort was made to expand the preschool program by the school," Principal Dawson said. "The staff noticed many students who entered kindergarten at Sorgho weren't enrolled in preschool here. There were no opportunities for these children."

The school then opened another class so that any child living in the district could attend preschool at Sorgho.

"We have the one class that serves students with disabilities, another Head Start class. ... a third class that serves KERA-eligible children as well as accepting tuition students," Dawson said. "Within two years, Sorgho went from one preschool classroom with two sessions to having three classrooms serving six sessions."

Superintendent Shelton says, despite Sorgho's growth, he still enjoys the school's rural charm.

"Even though it's a growing school and is becoming one of our larger schools, it still has that country feel to it," he said. "It's a very warm and friendly place to be."

MORE INFO ...

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This is the fourth profile in a series about Kentucky's five public 2007 Blue Ribbon Schools. The May issue of *Kentucky Teacher* will feature Whitesville Elementary (Daviness County). Previous issues this school year featured Highlands High School (Fort Thomas Independent), Farmington Elementary (Graves County) and Greathouse/Shryock Traditional Elementary (Jefferson County).

Gatton Academy lets academic stars burn brighter

By Matthew Tungate

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Senior Julia Freeman will spend this summer doing an internship in bio-medical research in Cincinnati. It's an opportunity any college graduate would be excited about getting.

But Freeman is not a *college* senior. She is a high school senior at the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky on the campus of Western Kentucky University (WKU). She is taking college classes and earning dual high school and college credits while living on the college campus with other academy students in Schneider Hall.

Freeman, from Eddyville in Lyon County, credits the classes she has taken the last two semesters at Western Kentucky University with helping prepare her for the internship.

"I would have never gotten that opportunity in my home high school," she said.

Opportunity is what the academy is all about, according to Julia Roberts, executive director of the Gatton Academy and Western's Center for Gifted Studies.

"It is for those few students who are very advanced in math and science and the other STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines. It's an opportunity to take that lid off learning and let them go," she said. "Frankly, for most students that can be done in their schools. But everybody who's taught knows of a student or a few students who need far more than others – and that's really what the academy was planned to accommodate."

Senior Tyler Jury said he was content with the education he was getting at

Elizabethtown (Independent) High School, and initially wasn't going to apply to the Gatton Academy.

"When my mom first brought the application to me, I was like, 'Man, that sounds kind of dumb,'" he said.

He played high school baseball and golf and didn't want to leave his friends. Once he researched it more and found he wouldn't have to pay anything to receive dual credit, he decided to apply.

"Being able to get 30 credit hours, it's basically like a full-ride scholarship for one year," Jury said.

Even more important than the college credit is the opportunity to take college classes, said Roberts, who founded WKU's Center for Gifted Studies 27 years ago. She said she watched other states form academies for years. Then 10 years ago, she and others began planning ways to fund an academy for high-achieving students in Kentucky.

"My major concern is that every child makes continuous progress, and that means learning new things every day," she said. "The real watchwords are 'continuous progress,' and that is true for children who need more time and children who need less time in order to learn something."

Students come from across the state

Those are exactly the kind of students the academy is seeking, according to Corey Alderdice, assistant director of admissions and public relations. Alderdice said the Gatton Academy received 190 applications from students in 75 counties who wanted to attend the academy this year. Only 120 students from 61 counties were selected to be the academy's first students.

"They're spread all throughout the state, which is a wonderful testament to the need for this kind of program across the state," he said. "It is for the students in Appalachia, it's for the students in northern Kentucky, and it's for the students in the Jackson Purchase region as well. It really shows that there is a very clear and present need for rigor in all parts of the state."

Roberts, the executive director, said the state will benefit from the bonds the students are creating in their time living in the same building. "The academy creates a cadre of very bright young minds, that if they go off to Cal Tech and MIT, they've created relationships," she said.

The Gatton Academy should return dollars to Kentucky through its investment in the state's best and brightest, she added. "Innovation and entrepreneurship are key words as we're working with these academy students," Roberts said. "These ought to be young people who can create jobs as well as fill jobs."

All students eventually will become involved in research, she said. "So they're generating knowledge," she said. "Those opportunities are seldom available in high school."

Adjusting to campus life, academics

Gatton Academy Director Tim Gott said many of the academy's students find academics more taxing. "We knew the courses were going to be a challenge and most of the students would not maintain a 4.0," he said.

Nineteen students ended their first semester at the academy with a 4.0 average. "We knew that many of them would get their first B or C," Gott said. "We wanted to take away the ceiling that they have been bouncing off of and give them a challenge. If you're truly going to challenge folks then you've got to put them in a little more of a crucible than what they've been used to."

Bruce Kessler, mathematics professor and assistant dean of Ogden College of Science and Engineering at WKU, said the academy's first

group of high school juniors and seniors were similar to college freshmen because they had to adjust to being responsible for themselves. They were different, however, in that most have not been engaged in rigorous, relevant learning experiences in all classes.

Because of that, they didn't come to the academy with the same level of study skills that general students do. "So they were, in essence, a little bit disadvantaged. And that surprised me," he said. "We learned some lessons, and I think the academy



A common area with plenty of desk space and Internet access at the Gatton Academy offers a study area for Justin Howell, a junior from Hawesville, left, Clay Peace, a junior from Verona, and senior Paul Travers of Somerset.

learned some lessons, too, about the preparations that are needed."

Kessler can relate. He said he did very well in high school and college and wasn't really challenged until he attended graduate school at Vanderbilt University. "That was a tough lesson for me to learn, and it took me a while to battle through it. I almost gave up," he said. "These students are getting that experience now."

Gatton Academy students have a lot of academic and social support, Kessler said.

They are also with the best of the best. "Being the best at a small county high school does not mean you are necessarily the best or as good as you think you are," he said.

Academy students can be pushed to their full potential. "They're able to reach their potential now whereas before they would have just gotten A's," Kessler said.

Students found they had to be responsible to get themselves to class, eat right and get enough sleep. "Some of them had some adjusting to do about 3 in the morning playing video games with their buddies and realizing the 7 o'clock hour was getting close and they had to get up and go to class," Gott said.

He has seen the students mature as they've been challenged academically and been away from home. "Some of them will say it's harder than it's ever been and they've had some hard classes, but they actually learned something," Gott said.

Not all of the learning has been of the academic variety. Living with someone else who comes from a different background has been a big transition, according to Jury, the Elizabethtown senior. "I hate doing dishes," he said.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Senior Tyler Jury of Elizabethtown researches online in his dorm room at the Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science. Two students share each room, and each living suite comprises two rooms and a bathroom.



Senior Jon Reynolds of Florence, front right, blends in with college students in a history class at Western Kentucky University.

It also took some time for the 6-foot Jury to get used to sleeping in the dorm's loft bed. "The first two weeks I was here, every time I'd wake up in the morning I'd hit my head on the ceiling," he said.

Last year, 190 students from 75 counties applied for the 60 junior and 60 senior positions for this school year. For the 2008-09 school year, 127 students from 61 counties applied to be juniors at the Gatton Academy.

Alderdice, the assistant director of admissions, believes more local districts know about the academy and are willing to view it as an educational partner.

Last year, for example, there was one parent at an information session in Bullitt County. This year, there were 30. "There's a tremendous amount of difference when they realize how fruitful this partnership can be not only for the school and for the Gatton Academy, but very much for the student," he said.

To be a strong candidate, a student has to be well-prepared and has to be thinking about the ACT as a freshman and sophomore. Schools also must allow students to take high-level courses as soon as they show the ability to succeed. A student must have had Algebra I and II and geometry by the end of the sophomore year to qualify for the academy as a junior, Alderdice said.

"When a student is ready for the rigor, let them go ahead and pursue whatever is available. That just means as they come to this next

opportunity, they're ready to pursue it and they're academically prepared for it," he said.

Academy students' test scores are included in their home schools' Commonwealth Accountability Testing System scores. The better they do, the better the districts do, Alderdice said.

Gott, the academy's director, said he knows people expect academy students to score well on tests, such as the Kentucky Core Content Test. "There should be nothing below a proficient in any core content, and distinguished should be the norm instead of the exception," he said. "I think they have a sense of pride in their accomplishments on tests like that. I think we'll see scores equal to or above (what students would have scored) if they would have stayed at home."

Academy students have seen an average ACT-score increase of two points. The students also have an average PSAT score percentile of



Senior Julia Freeman of Eddyville works on a research project under Associate Professor Kinchel Doerner in a lab at Western Kentucky University. The Gatton Academy student is not receiving class credit for her work in the lab; she just wanted to take advantage of the opportunity, she said.

81, with five students who were in the 98th percentile or higher. "This group should do that, if we're pulling some of the top students from every school," Gott said.

But more important than scores, the academy is about more than just mathematics and science education, it's about the whole child, he said.

"We're trying to help students learn about who they are emotionally, spiritually, physically, mentally and relationally, so that they come out of here with skills to not only be one of the top students in their courses, but also to have the people skills to help them be suc-

cessful at any level," he said. "The measure of our success is not our test scores, but the positive influence we can have on the lives of our students. Yes, I realize I'm going to be scrutinized by what their ACT scores are and what their overall success rate in college might be, but I'm more concerned about what kind of people they're going to be."

MORE INFO:

www.wku.edu/academy

Corey Alderdice, assistant director of Admissions and Public Relations, (270) 745-6565, corey.alderdice@wku.edu

Alex Boswell, a senior from Edmonton, stretches out at the Gatton Academy to study notes on her laptop.

New EPSB requirements for online, out-of-state education programs

Educators considering online programs from postsecondary institutions outside Kentucky to gain the required master's degree for rank change or any new certification should be aware of a recent regulation change (16 KAR 5:010) enacted by the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB).

Effective June 1, any continuing education program used for rank change or new/additional certification that is earned via an online and out-of-state provider must meet the following three criteria:

- It must be approved by the state of origin, if that state grants such approval.
- It must be regionally accredited.
- It must be accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). This requirement has been added by the regulation change.

"With the online landscape changing so quickly and with the increase in online providers who simply sell degrees on the Internet, the EPSB believed that there needed to be further safeguards for educators who may become interested in programs that do not lead to true enhancement of the base teaching certificate, which is the purpose of rank changes," said Phillip Rogers, EPSB executive director.

It is the responsibility of the Kentucky educator to have assurance from the online, out-of-state educational provider that the three criteria are met. However, those educators who have begun such a program before June 1, 2008, may complete the program and have it considered for rank change.

Any out-of-state program completed by a Kentucky educator for a new or additional certification area has always been subject to evaluation under the former regulation, which did not include NCATE accreditation.

"Educators have always needed to be very cautious when seeking degrees from out of state, whether they have been for rank change or new or additional certification," said Mike

Carr, EPSB director of educator certification. "Kentucky, like every state, has its own specific requirements in these areas. For example, other states have no idea what is meant by a 'rank change,' so we cannot get a university recommendation for those. This has always made it more difficult to process these applications.

"Attempting to gain an initial or additional certification via an out-of-state program, especially those conducting only online instruction, has always been a risk," Carr added, "because such programs are not governed by the EPSB and there is no assurance that they are approved for Kentucky requirements.

"In essence, the educator is gaining the certification in another state, and then bringing the certification to Kentucky to see if it can be accepted here. We cannot always do that due to our regulations," Carr said.

The EPSB also is requiring all Kentucky teacher education institutions to submit new master's programs for rank changes to ensure these programs meet current needs of educators in increasing student achievement. This move came after committee and focus-group work on revamping rank change programs.

Marilyn Troupe, EPSB director of educator preparation, said the review will look for collaboration with local school districts. "Teacher education institutions are required to document collaboration with school districts and review the professional growth plan for teachers when redesigning the master's programs," she said.

"The board felt very strongly that our teachers need new skill sets to work with students and data in the current environment," Rogers said. "We think these new programs will be much more interactive for our educators, and they will feel like they are gaining very relevant skills for their investment."

MORE INFO ...

www.kyepsb.net

New environmental education Web site

A new tool is available for teachers interested in the environment and environmental education. EEinKentucky.org is a new Web site that offers a one-stop resource for teachers and all Kentuckians. It provides a simple, straightforward way to discover environmental education opportunities and resources – a classroom speaker or information about water quality in the state.

The Web site features a searchable database that includes an events calendar, a resources page, environmental reports, a listing of current grant opportunities and much more.

EEinKentucky.org will continue to grow and improve as the number of registered partners and schools increases. Teachers interested in registering a school can visit the Web site, click on the "Schools" tab, select "Add School" and follow the instructions. Registered teachers may add items to the events calendar.

The Kentucky Environmental Education Council, in partnership with the Kentucky Association for Environmental Education, maintains the Web site.

MORE INFO ...

www.eeinkentucky.org

Contact: Kentucky Environmental Education Council, (800) 882-5271



Photo by Amy Wallot

Walking in the light

Students walk down a light-filled hallway at Bridgeport Elementary (Franklin County) that offers a blank canvas on which to display student work and art projects. More than 400 students, preschool through 5th grade, attend the school.

Design your own arts-integration PD at annual Faubush seminar/retreat

The Kentucky Arts Council's annual Design Your Own Professional Development seminar provides educators with the unique opportunity to select from a variety of hands-on workshops led by professional artists from the council's Arts Education Roster.

The seminar is July 22-24 at the Kentucky Leadership Center near Faubush (Pulaski County).

The \$250 per-participant registration fee includes lodging, meals, snacks and resource materials. (Discounts are available for commuting teachers.) When teaching team members enroll together, the second teacher (and any subsequent teachers) gets a \$10 discount.

The workshops – some new and some repeats of popular workshops – will demonstrate how to teach arts and humanities core content through hands-on activities and how to integrate the arts across the curriculum:

- Mitch Barrett will lead participants in song-writing across the curriculum.
- Paper engineer Jane McTeigue shows teachers how to create pop-up materials for any subject matter.
- Michael Maydak will help teachers explore basic cartooning skills and then demonstrate how to connect cartooning to different curriculum areas.

Some workshops will focus on specific periods of history and humanities, such as Pat Banks' workshop on illuminated manuscripts. Some focus on specific cultures, such

as Yolantha Harrison-Pace's workshop on West African dance and culture.

Several workshops, such as weaving, dulcimer playing and basketry, will have advanced sessions targeting teachers who have some experience or who have participated in previous beginning-level workshops. All presenters have received training in Kentucky's Program of Studies and have had hands-on classroom experience in implementing the new arts and humanities core content for assessment.

Each session will include suggestions for writing activities and a discussion of the relevant core content, depth of knowledge and open-response questions. Teachers will be able to swap favorite arts and arts-integration lessons.

The two-and-a-half-day event will benefit educators in any area of the curriculum, as well as special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, parent coordinators, Family Resource/Youth Service Centers directors and parents. Participants will receive 12 to 18 hours of professional development credit by attending plenary sessions and four to five breakout workshops of their own choosing.

Optional evening activities include folk dancing and entertainment by some of Kentucky's best artists.

MORE INFO ...

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov>

Grants help students master 'art' of learning

By Matthew Tungate

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Students in Laura Mason's U.S. History classes at Danville (Independent) High School got the opportunity to relive history this semester as they performed scenes from events of the 1920s under the guidance of a professional actor.

Artist Susan Pope spent about six days over a two-week period helping students prepare dramatic interpretations of history lessons they were learning from Mason – politics and culture of the 1920s, issues like isolationism, prohibition, economics and the Harlem Renaissance, and prominent people of the time.

"Only getting something from lecture often doesn't give them the visual ability to remember things," Mason said. "By bringing in an artist-in-residence, you've got a person who's going to hone in on certain traits or skills that students may not even realize they have."

The school partially funded Pope's time with Mason's classes through a Teacher Initiated Program (TIP) grant from the Kentucky Arts Council. The grant is intended to help teachers bring professional artists into Kentucky schools. Teachers apply for the one- through four-week programs using art-

ists from the Arts Council's roster for either the spring or fall semester. A panel of educators, arts professionals and other individuals decides which grants are funded.

John S. Benjamin, arts education program director, said the Teacher Initiated Program is the Arts Council's oldest arts-education program. "The point of any residency program is to give students hands-on experience in making art," he said.

Data shows students learn better with the arts and some of them learn very little without them, Benjamin said. "The data is unsailable, and yet so many people don't get it yet," he said. "If they want to bring grades up, they need to put arts in the curriculum."

Benjamin said he has drawers full of letters from teachers with success stories. "It reads like a book of miracles, because there are so many kids out there who are not being reached, and very often the arts are the key that reaches them," he said.

In some cases, an artist-in-residence program may be the only arts experience a student gets. "We provide very thorough training to our artists in integrating whatever their art form is into the curriculum," he said.

The Arts Council has two deadlines for the TIP grants, one in October and another

in January. Typically, the council gets 120-130 applications in October and 50-60 in January, Benjamin said.

For the current semester, the Arts Council received 92 applications and funded 80, higher than the typical 75 percent acceptance, he said. Nine out of 10 times, the Arts Council has money left over, he said.

"We won't fund mediocre applications, so it's not unusual to have money left over because there weren't enough really good applications," Benjamin said.

The most recent cycle that ended in January was the first where teachers were required to apply exclusively online, and that cut the number to about 30, he said.

The teacher is supposed to write the application with assistance from the artist. Teachers should be talking to an artist about ideas well ahead of filling out the application, Benjamin said.

"Writing a good grant application can't be done overnight," he said. "If they take the time to do it well, they've got a great shot at receiving a grant."

Benjamin expects that a teacher, after planning with the artist, could complete the application in about a week. "The successful residency is totally based on the number of exposures the kids get with the artist," he said.

The panel that evaluates the grants looks at the quality of the performance expectations on the application and is prohibited from evaluating any other factors, he said. "The success stories are legion. Once schools have this experience, a high percentage of them come back with additional applications."

That has been the case for Bonnie Johnson, library media specialist at East Bernstadt (Independent) Elementary School. The school

has had at least one artist in residence for the last six years, including three in the fall and two this spring.

"We've had wonderful experiences with them," she said. "We've been able to afford

opportunities for our students that otherwise they might not have had. There's no way our school could pay for five professional artists to come in and meet with our students without match money from the Arts Council."

Teachers at East Bernstadt started out using the grants to design lessons that would teach students about their own culture and heritage, while helping them understand they live in a multi-cultural society.

This year the school is co-hosting the Redbud Folk Life Festival May 8-10 in London. Students will attend and participate in a variety of arts and crafts activities, such as basket making, as well as music, singing and dancing.

"It opens up a whole new world for them," Johnson said. "A lot of them don't realize there are people who make a living in the arts. A lot of times, the arts are not portrayed as a place where you can make a decent living."

Every East Bernstadt student, primary through 8th grade, will have contact with an artist this year, she said.

"I think the artists do a wonderful job of going over core content with our students, and I think our teachers do a wonderful job of going over core content that's required for the arts and humanities assessment," Johnson said. "It's just a different way to reach some kids."

Mason, the Danville teacher, said teachers need to be patient when using an artist in class, because some students don't want to participate, "so you have to find something that works for that particular classroom." Last semester, for instance, it was the day before classroom presentations before her students found a piece that worked "because they were so negative and pessimistic." But it worked out great, she said.

"If given the opportunity to bring in an outside source rather than just having students sitting in class and learning in a traditional setting – if you can make the time – it is very much worth the while because students remember more," Mason said.



Mason



Photos by Amy Wallot

Senior Emisha Coulter, left, takes a feather boa for her costume from Susan Pope, an artist in residence who helped students in Laura Mason's U.S. History classes at Danville (Independent) High School depict scenes from the 1920s. Coulter sang a solo during the program.

MORE INFO ...

http://artsCouncil.ky.gov/guide/prog6/tip_guid.htm

State board members respond to Q&A

Each month, *Kentucky Teacher* is profiling one or more of the 11 appointed members of the Kentucky Board of Education. This issue focuses on board members Judith H. Gibbons of Lakeside Park and John Douglas Hubbard of Bardstown.

Gibbons wants students to get 'joy' of reading

Judith Gibbons is the retired vice president of a professional career management firm. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and has a long history of involvement in education initiatives. For the last 12 years, her focus has been on implementing stronger collaboration between the business and education communities.

Gibbons serves on the Northern Kentucky University Foundation, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Education Alliance, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the American Cancer Society and Vision 2015. She is a graduate of Leadership Northern Kentucky.

Gibbons is vice chair of the state board's Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment committee and a member of the Audit Committee. Her term expires in April 2010. Here are the questions posed by *Kentucky Teacher* and her answers.



Gibbons

Talk to Us!

Kentucky Teacher wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

E-mail: kyteacher@education.ky.gov

Phone: (502) 564-2000

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Write: Kentucky Teacher
612 Capital Plaza Tower
500 Mero St.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Why is what you do as a board member important to students today?

My role as a board member is important to students today because I am part of a team that provides leadership and oversight for the implementation of programs and strategies to accelerate student progression toward a rewarding and productive adult life.

Other than parents and teachers, who — or what — has had the biggest effect on our students' educations in the last few years?

Other than parents and educators, I feel the biggest effect on our students' educations in recent years is the ever-increasing advancement of technology and its utilization in the classroom. The computer and the Internet have provided a myriad of opportunities for research, instruction and academic applications that afford students not only a domestic perspective but significant exposure to global learning as well. Systemic initiatives such as the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) provide tremendous resources for students, teachers and parents to work together to develop well-crafted personal goals and educational attainment for each student. The downside of advanced technology has been the frenzy of student usage of personal cell phones, instant messaging and MySpace-type Web sites that are creating serious issues that negatively impact students.

What has the board done most to help teachers during your time on the board?

We regularly review effective educational strategies and provide input in the development of initiatives based on best practices and lessons learned, both within the state and across the nation. Our goal is to provide teachers with cutting-edge methodology that they can utilize in preparing and delivering a substantive education for every child. When students become engaged in learning, they carry their success into advanced education and training, and the state benefits from having a better-educated and informed citizenry.

What would you like to accomplish that you haven't yet as a board member?

I would like to see every student in Kentucky reading at grade level or above and experiencing the joy that comes from opening a book and stepping into the world of exploration, wonder and imagination. Literacy is a pursuit with far-reaching ramifications, enabling lifelong learning and enjoyment.

What personal trait has served you best as a board member?

I put forth my best effort in preparation in order to be well versed about the issues and able to contribute to the task at hand.

What are the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children?

I think the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children result from the lack of significant financial resources that would offer all students the opportunity to receive not just an adequate education but a superior one to prepare them for unlimited opportunity in employment and personal success. Funding is a critical piece in addressing all aspects of education.

What small change would have the greatest impact on Kentucky's schools?

In education, there are no small changes. Reform is always a word with large implications.

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

I want them to know I support them and their efforts, and I fully appreciate the critical role they play in shaping young lives, and by extension, the future vitality of our state and nation. I also want them to know that I strongly encourage their participation in the growth and development of their schools and student populations, and that I am here to help in any way.

Hubbard: Teachers need inspiration and support

Doug Hubbard is an attorney in Bardstown. He has a lifelong connection with Bardstown High School as a student, parent, sports volunteer and member of the Bardstown Foundation for Excellence in Education.

He participates in a variety of civic activities, including the Jaycees and Kiwanis. His honors include being named Nelson County's Outstanding Young Man in 1968 and being appointed to the Bardstown/Nelson County Hall of Fame in 2004.

He holds a bachelor's degree in commerce and a juris doctorate degree from the University of Kentucky.



Hubbard

sity of Kentucky.

Hubbard is vice chairman of the state board's Management Committee and also serves on the Audit Committee. His term expires in April 2010.

Why is what you do as a board member important to students today?

The preparation for either further education or the work force is a must for Kentucky.

What long-term goals do you have as a member of the board?

Proficiency by 2014

What lies beyond "proficiency" in 2014?

We must evaluate where we are or expect to be at that time. Based on that evaluation, we should establish new goals and the process for accomplishing those goals.

Other than parents and teachers, who — or what — has made the biggest effect on our students' educations in the last few years?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and our funding

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

Garnis Martin — He was a great coach and made his teaching relevant to our lives outside school.

What will teachers need most from future boards?

Teachers must be provided with leadership to inspire them and support them in their tasks.

What would you like to accomplish that you haven't yet as a board member?

A mandatory year-round school calendar for all schools

What have you gained from your public service as a state board member?

A greater appreciation for those who are on the front lines and for the complexities of the system as a whole

Other than more money, what do Kentucky schools need most?

Business and community support

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

I was fortunate enough to serve during trying times. Securing a new commissioner and focusing our efforts on proficiency have been paramount. I believe the Kentucky Board of Education should be more involved in the overall goal of proficiency by 2014 and less involved in micromanagement.

LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Four Kentucky communities honored for quality learning environments in 2008

Four Kentucky communities are among the 2008 America's Promise Alliance 100 Best Communities for Young People.

The honor is given to the top communities across the country that are working to create good learning environments and to keep students in school.

Kentucky's representatives on this list and their school districts are Lexington (Fayette County), Louisville metro area (Jefferson County), Mount Sterling (Montgomery County) and Murray (Calloway County and Murray Independent).

All four communities have earned distinction on this list the last three years. Best Communities judges recognized these communities in large part because:

- Lexington assures its youth have an adult support system, are physically and mentally healthy, and have positive experiences during nonschool-hour programming. We Can, a new education outreach program, helps youth ages 8-13 remain a healthy weight through improved food choices and increased physical activity.
- Metro Louisville initiated Every1Reads, a cross-sector program that has helped reduce the number of students reading below grade level. The program, sponsored by Greater Louisville Inc., mobilizes community volunteers to assist struggling readers in schools and during after-school programs.
- Mount Sterling works to ensure students have the best problem-solving skills to manage their futures. The Reality Store program provides mock life experiences for 8th-graders. As part of the program, students are given jobs, salaries and check-books, and they must face costs and problems associated with daily living.
- The Murray/Calloway County area puts emphasis on strengthening families and improving outcomes for children and youth by identifying needs, opportunities and priorities for future action; promoting effective city/school collaboration; encouraging and supporting youth voice, engagement and leadership; and measuring progress over time.

www.americaspromise.org

State superintendent pay averages more than \$100,000

As of the 2006-07 fiscal year, more than 100 of Kentucky's 174 public school superintendents were making salaries higher than \$100,000. That number has nearly tripled since 2000.

A Kentucky Department of Education report provides superintendent salaries for fiscal years 2001-02 through 2006-07. In that time, salary averages for superintendents have increased from \$90,268 to \$105,874, a 3 percent increase.

Last year, the salary range for Kentucky superintendents went from less than \$47,000 to \$208,000. Jefferson County is the lone district with a superintendent making more than \$200,000. In all, 10 salaries dropped below the \$90,000 mark while five – including Jefferson County — grew higher than \$150,000.

According to the Education Research Service, the average U.S. salary for a public school district superintendent in 2006-07 was \$121,155.

Based on district student enrollment, average salaries for superintendents in the U.S. are:

- \$109,245 for 300-2,499 students
- \$135,635 for 2,500-9,999 students
- \$160,047 for 10,000-24,999 students
- \$200,751 for 25,000 students or more

By region, the report cited by the American Association of School Administrators indicated that the top superintendent salaries are in the Mideast states, followed by New England and far western states.

Southeastern U.S., which includes Kentucky, has an average mean salary of \$116,619, almost \$30,000 below the Mideast average and \$5,000 less than the national average.

Out of Kentucky's 174 school districts, superintendent salaries in 22 districts decreased from 2005-06 to 2006-07. One district salary remained the same, and one district didn't report its superintendent's salary for 2006-07.

Of the 22 districts that had lower superintendent salaries, the largest drop was \$34,331 while the smallest decrease was \$1.

Commissioner launches new effort to communicate with superintendents

Kentucky Commissioner of Education Jon Draud recently began an effort to keep superintendents informed on activities in which he is involved as well as ongoing issues within the Department of Education.

In a recent e-mail, the commissioner told state superintendents: "As a part of our continuing efforts to provide superintendents with the most critical information affecting our work, as quickly as we are aware of it, and specifically targeted to your needs and interests, we are beginning a process of infrequent e-mails from me called 'On the Radar.' 'On the Radar' is designed to briefly inform you of new, high-interest information that has just appeared on the department's radar screen but that we may not have detailed informa-

tion about as yet.

"We will send an e-mail formatted in brief bullets that will provide the new information, a timeline when we expect it to occur, if available, and the name of an individual that you may contact for any additional information. We'll also be interested in hearing from you about the types of information you'd like to have included in 'On the Radar,' as well as any other means of communication that you feel might be useful to keep you informed," the commissioner told superintendents.

CPE report connects education to income

The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) recently released Kentucky's 2008-10 "County Profiles." The profiles show that counties with high numbers of college graduates also have high household median incomes. Of the 20 counties with the highest number of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher, 13 of those counties also rank in the top 20 counties with the highest median household income.

The report, a biennial publication of the

council, compiles data from national, state and other resources to provide education-related profiles of 120 counties, 15 area development districts and eight public postsecondary institution service regions. The report also contains charts and maps highlighting some of Kentucky's more critical issues like poverty, unemployment and Medicaid.

Profiles include information regarding:

- educational attainment
- college readiness and participation
- employment by sector
- undergraduate enrollment
- financial aid

The report found that only five of Kentucky's counties are at or above the national average in the percentage of adults with a bachelor's degree or higher. These counties are Fayette (35.6 percent), Oldham (30.6), Woodford (25.9), Jefferson (24.8) and Warren (24.7). The national average is 24.4 percent, and the overall Kentucky average is 17.1 percent.

To view the full report, go to the Council on Postsecondary Education's Web site.

www.cpe.ky.gov/info/county



Photo by Amy Wallot

Statewide Career Fair

University of Kentucky education student Donald Hughes talks with Kiyon Massey, staff recruiter for the Fayette County school district, about beginning a second career as a history teacher. Hughes, who is retired from the military, met with and was interviewed by several district administrators from throughout Kentucky at the first Aspiring Educators Career Fair. Many pre-service students, current educators and second-career professionals participated in the event in anticipation of finding teaching positions in Kentucky. The event was sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education, Division of Educator Quality and Diversity, in Louisville during March.

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Conferences

High school economics

The Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) will hold its second Right Start Conference for high school educators June 9-12 at Rough River State Resort Park. The program is structured as a business conference with emphasis on economic content appropriate to teaching high school economics. The Foundation for Teaching Economics will cover costs for registration, materials, most meals and lodging at the park. (A \$100 honorarium will be awarded if lodging is not needed.) Registration information is online.

Contact: KCEE, (800) 436-3266

www.econ.org

Middle School Association

The Kentucky Middle School Association (KMSA) annual conference will be held Sept. 21-23 in Louisville. Special features of the conference include a student recognition luncheon, keynote speaker Sharon Faber, sessions by the 2008 Schools to Watch, content area strands and more than 30 exhibitors.

www.kmsaonline.com

Early Childhood Regional Training Centers

Early Childhood Regional Training Centers are having an annual conference June 9-11 in Lexington. The Kentucky Department of Education funds the centers to provide professional development and technical assistance for early childhood educators.

Contact: Carole Sindelar, (270) 586-2008, carole.sindelar@simpson.kyschools.us

Events

'The Wall that Heals'

The 250-foot replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., will be on exhibit April 24-27 at Centre College's Norton Center for the Arts in Danville. School groups can visit the exhibit and a mobile museum about the war at no charge. An educator's guide is available online to prepare middle and high school students for the visit.

www.nortoncenter.com/show/117

Forestry, Entomology Leadership Programs

High school juniors and seniors can apply to the Kentucky Forest and Entomology Leadership Programs, June 2-6, near Somerset. Event sponsors are the Natural Resource Educational Opportunity with the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Division of Forestry, Kentucky

Division of Conservation, UK Environmental and Natural Resource Task Force, and Kentucky Water Resources Research Institute. This hands-on experience concentrates on natural-resource management. Students will experience forestry, civil engineering, entomology, soil science, wildlife habitat assessment and water-quality management. Registration deadline is May 16.

Contact: Doug McLaren for forestry, dmclaren@uky.edu; Blake Newton for entomology, blaken@uky.edu

www.ca.uky.edu/forestryextension/KentuckyForestLP.php

www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/news/kfelp.asp

History Teacher of the Year

The Kentucky Historical Society is seeking nominations from outstanding 7th-12th grade American history teachers to become Kentucky's finalist for the national Preserve America History Teacher of the Year. The winner will receive \$1,000, books for the school library and the chance to compete for the national title. A brochure with nomination criteria and submission guidelines is available. Nomination postmark deadline is April 30.

Contact: Rebecca Hanly, (502) 564-1792, ext. 4475, rebecca.hanly@ky.gov

Personal Financial Summit

The Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE) and its organization partners will host the Personal Financial Summit in the Bluegrass June 25-26 in Louisville. Sessions will focus on teaching young people to be financially literate so they can budget, spend, save and invest money they earn. An economist from the St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank will lead a refresher course for educators, "ABCs of Personal Finance." Exhibits, concurrent sessions with classroom materials, presentations by state and national speakers and an Excellence in Economic Education luncheon will be part of the free two-day event. Registration information is online.

Contact: KCEE, (800) 436-3266

www.econ.org

Sprint education grants

Sprint is sponsoring a national education grant program titled "Sprint Ahead for Education." Sprint will award grants to U.S. public school districts and individual public schools to fund the purchase of resources that facilitate and encourage character education among K-12 students. The application period ends April 15.

www.sprint.com/citizenship/education/sprintahead

Summer scholarships for school counselors

The Kentucky Counseling Association is offering summer scholarship assistance for educators interested in becoming school counselors who already possess an undergraduate degree. The association also provides grants of \$100 for textbooks. Lindsey Wilson College, the University of Louisville and Eastern Kentucky, Morehead State, Murray State, Western Kentucky and Xavier (Ohio) universities will each provide one tuition waiver. The deadline for submitting materials is April 15.

www.kyca.org

'Understanding Evolution and Adaptations'

A workshop co-sponsored by the Louisville Zoo and the Falls of the Ohio State Park, called "Understanding Evolution and Adaptations," will be held July 14-15 in Louisville. This program, designed to help teachers and interested educators better understand the unifying scientific concept of evolution, is geared for teachers in grades 6-12.

www.louisvillezoo.org/education/prodevelop.htm

INSPIRE Summer Academy

The Institute for P-12 Engineering Research and Learning, INSPIRE, at Purdue University in Indiana, is accepting applications for the INSPIRE Summer Academy, July 27-Aug. 1. This academy is for 2nd- to 4th-grade educator teams composed of at least seven teachers from up to three buildings in the same school district. Application deadline is May 1.

<http://engineering.purdue.edu/INSPIRE>

Resources

Human bodies exhibit

"Bodies: The Exhibition," which features 15 fully dissected human cadavers as well as more than 200 separate organ specimens, is on exhibit at the Cincinnati Museum Center until Sept. 1. Accompanying the exhibit is a 45-minute OmniMax presentation featuring the human body. The exhibit focuses on the structure and function of each body system as well as how to maintain homeostasis. Teacher guides are online; group rates are available.

www.cincymuseum.org

Social studies newsletter

The Kentucky Department of Education has begun a monthly electronic social studies newsletter that will be distributed on the 15th of every month. The newsletter has five sections: social studies in the classroom, news

(continued on Page 15)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Highland Elementary (Lincoln County)

BULLETIN BOARD (Continued)

you can use, hot-button issues/frequently asked questions, professional development opportunities and announcements. To sign up for the electronic newsletter, go to the Web link below and subscribe to the KYSOCSTU listserv.

Contact: Mark Kopp, (502) 564-2106, ext. 4144, mark.kopp@education.ky.gov
www.uky.edu/education/kylists2.html

Newton's Universe

The Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Kentucky is offering "Newton's Universe," a selection of online physics courses created specifically for grades 4-9 teachers. These guided-inquiry courses are open nationwide to teachers at all grade levels. Each course earns one graduate

credit or 30 hours of professional development credit.

www.pa.uky.edu/sciworks/intro.htm

NASA Quest challenges

NASA Quest announces a new challenge for this spring plus a new mathematics unit for students in grades 6-9. The LIMA (Landsat Image Mosaic of Antarctica) Challenge from NASA Quest began accepting registrations in March. In this challenge, students become scientists and propose Antarctic research. Moon Math! is a set of two mathematics units designed for 9th-graders. The units are centered on the lunar habitat design theme.

<http://quest.nasa.gov/vft>

2009 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Program Nomination Form

Are you doing great things in the classroom or do you know an elementary, middle or high school teacher who should be recognized for outstanding instructional practices? Use this form to apply for the Teacher of the Year Program or to nominate a teacher.

Teacher's name _____

School name _____

School district _____

He/She is an excellent teacher because: _____

Nominator's name (optional) _____

Clip and return this nomination form by mail to:

2009 Kentucky Teacher of the Year Program
 C/O Donna Melton
 Kentucky Department of Education
 500 Mero St., Room 1716
 Frankfort, KY 40601

Fax form to: (502) 564-6952, to attention of Donna Melton

E-mail nomination information to: donna.melton@education.ky.gov

Nomination form online at www.ashland.com/KTOY

Nomination deadline: May 15



ASHLAND

Sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland Inc.



Photo by Amy Wallot

He's got milk!

Kindergarten student Jason Gordon puts his body – hands, arms, neck and shoulders – into carrying milk for several friends and him at Bridgeport Elementary (Franklin County). Half pints of milk are available to approximately 500,000 students every day in public, private and parochial schools and residential child-care institutions in Kentucky as part of the National School Lunch Program.

A.D. Owens students 'ROAR' each morning

"OK, Tigers, it's time to ROAR!" Principal Gregg Frank exclaims every morning as he concludes morning announcements at A.D. Owens Elementary School (Newport Independent). Then he presses the play button on a small tape recorder, and "R – O – A – R," a ferocious tiger growl fills the hallways and classrooms.

The growl signals the 8 a.m. beginning of R.O.A.R. (Reaching Outstanding Achievements in Reading). Students and teachers know it's time for an uninterrupted block devoted to reading.

After much discussion, planning and professional development, the school's instructional leadership team developed and implemented R.O.A.R. The school's instructional assistants and all certified staff, including those who do not have homerooms, participate in R.O.A.R. Each K-5 classroom has two adults who serve as reading helpers for 50 minutes at the beginning of each school day.

The program is composed of three parts: read-aloud, small group instruction and "The Phonics Dance," created by Jenny Dowd, a 1st-grade teacher in Ohio. Each component has a specific literacy focus:

- **Read-aloud:** As the homeroom teacher takes attendance and attends to morning details, the "reading helper" reads aloud to the students. At this time, a variety of reading genre is introduced to the students. In

some classrooms, the teacher selects the read-aloud; in others, the reading helper chooses the selections.

- **Small group instruction:** Normally by 8:15 a.m., small group instruction begins. Students work in small groups based on their instructional level or skill needs. A. D. Owens Elementary teachers use the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments to make instructional decisions for their students. In some classes, the small groups are in a learning-center format and in others it is a reading-group style.
- **"The Phonics Dance":** Students practice a series of chants based on letter sounds, vowel patterns and digraphs for the last five minutes of R.O.A.R.

As a result of R.O.A.R., reading scores have improved in all grade levels, according to Michelle Beagle, the school's reading intervention teacher. "School spirit has grown, the school day has a more effective, meaningful beginning and students look forward to beginning each day with a friendly face reading aloud a picture book, poems or a few chapters from a junior novel," she said.

MORE INFO...

Michelle Beagle, reading intervention teacher, (859) 292-3011, michelle.beagle@newport.kyschools.us

New DVD shows 'write' ways for every teacher to teach writing

By Matthew Tungate

matthew.tungate@education.ky.gov

Writing is not just for teachers in the language arts to help students produce portfolio pieces. All teachers should incorporate writing into their classes.

That is the point of the DVD "Teaching the Writer: What Students Need," produced by the Louisville-based Collaborative for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education.

CTL, which contracts with the department to provide training support for the writing portfolio portion of the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), developed the DVD last year to distribute free to writing cluster leaders in schools and districts.

Erin Stephens is a 12th-grade English teacher and writing cluster leader at Somerset (Independent) High School. She has used the DVD to show other teachers in her building ways to incorporate writing into the classroom.

"Teachers haven't seemed to understand that writing is something that is supposed to be incorporated or should have been incorporated all along," she said. "It's not something you stop and do."

Linda Leugers, the CATS writing consultant for CTL, said the DVD is a new kind of professional development. In most professional development, teachers receive a lot of theory and "how-to, but we have not received a lot of, 'Here's what it looks like,'" she said.

"We've always known that if we could get out of our classrooms and get into other people's classrooms, that we could learn a lot about best practices," Leugers said.

That's what her predecessor, Elizabeth Dick, set out to do when she began taping footage for the DVD about writing instruction in 2006. She went into schools with the CTL videographer, equipped with one camera and a few basic interview questions for teachers and students at different grade levels. She wanted to show real teachers, students and administrators talking about and demonstrating best practices in writing instruction.

Dick said she filled the DVD with educators who teach writers well. Many educators featured on the DVD serve on the state's Writing Advisory Committee (WAC) and Scoring Accuracy and Assurance Team (ScAAT).

Once the interviews and classroom segments were videotaped, she transcribed every word to review before selecting segments for the DVD. She asked Cherry Boyles, assistant director in the Department of Education's Division of Curriculum Development, to narrate transitions between segments.

The finished product is not meant to be



Photos by Amy Wallot

Erin Stephens talks with students in her English IV class at Somerset (Independent) High School in advance of watching what Kentucky teachers and students have to say about reflective writing on the "Teaching the Writer: What Students Need" DVD.

watched like a movie. It has a table of contents and is organized in to seven chapters: Introduction, The Three Types of Writing, Motivation, Prewriting, Writer's Craft, Revising and Editing, and Next Steps.

Within each chapter, users can choose from an introduction, segments that feature educators, students and classrooms, and a segment called "resources" that provides teachers further information related to that segment's topic. CTL has developed a companion viewing guide to help teachers navigate the segments.

Department of Education High School Writing Consultant Lee Ann Hager said that for schools to achieve high assessment scores during accountability years, writing instruction must occur every year in every grade as mandated by Kentucky's "Program of Studies." As the "Kentucky Writing Handbook" says, the goal for writing instruction in Kentucky is "to provide students with the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to become independent thinkers and writers."

The emphasis of Kentucky's writing curriculum is on writing instruction, not getting pieces ready for writing portfolios, Leugers said. "What you will not find in the DVD is a lot of references to the words 'writing portfolio' or 'state assessment,'" she said. "It's about writing instruction. The portfolio is not the end. The skill of the writer is the end. The portfolio is just a way for us to be able to measure how we are doing in the area of writing

instruction."

Writing portfolios are assessed in the 4th, 7th and 12th grades, and on-demand writing is assessed in the 5th, 8th and 12th grades.

While not every teacher is directly accountable for the writing portfolio, they are indirectly accountable, Leugers said. The DVD provides a lot of support for teachers who are not writing teachers. "Every person who comes out of our system to be successful needs to be a good writer," she said.

Dick, who developed the DVD, said writing across the curriculum at all grade levels is mandated by state regulations governing writing portfolios. She deliberately incorporated mathematics, science and social studies teachers, students and classroom lessons in the DVD to show that, she said.

Dick wanted the DVD separated into chapters so topics could be viewed individually all year. She also wanted it to be appropriate for all grades, so the material is not divided into elementary, middle and high school levels. "We wanted to show that writing instruction should occur across all grade levels and that there's similarity in that instruction," Dick said.

She conducted the interviews in the fall of 2006 and spring of 2007. Every teacher and student response, though not scripted, was what Kentucky teachers and students need to hear about writing instruction.

"There were so many times doing those interviews with the teachers and students and during the classroom lessons that I just wanted to stand up and cheer," she said.

For example, she wanted the DVD to address how to help students see themselves as writers. "When I started putting that together, regardless of the grade level of the teacher I was talking to, the first words out of their mouths were identical," she said. "They would say, 'I help my students see themselves as writers by calling them writers.'"

Last fall, Leugers trained almost 1,000 writing cluster leaders across the state to use the DVD in writing instruction. Those cluster leaders are responsible for taking the DVD back to their districts and using it to train teachers in their schools. She also led a session on the DVD at the 2008 Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference.

Teachers may get a free copy of the DVD by contacting their school or district writing cluster leader. Teachers may copy and distribute the DVD to meet the instructional needs of the school.

There is no way traditional professional development could do what the DVD does, Dick said.

"It includes 300 minutes of video clips that are divided neatly into sections that involve listening to what educators and students have to say and stepping inside classrooms to watch snippets of lessons. You can't replicate those for experiences in a traditional professional development session," she said.

MORE INFO ...

www.ctlonline.org

Linda Leugers, writing portfolio consultant for the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning, (800) 995-3965, ext. 326, lleugers@ctlonline.org



Teacher Erin Stephens conferences with Somerset High School senior Ashley Witt on a writing piece during English IV class.